

Capsule Summary  
SM-770  
Four Tobacco Barns  
Oakley vicinity  
Private

circa 1950s

The construction of tobacco barns tends to be associated with rises in market prices. It is therefore not surprising that four of the largest tobacco barns in the county were constructed on the east side of Oakley Road in the mid-twentieth century. As the Agricultural Schedules of the United States Census for the years 1940-1950 reveal, large increases in tobacco yields were reflective of the rising price of Maryland tobacco. In combination for increased needs, improvements in fertilizers and mechanical planting also resulted in increased yields. In order to house this the crop, farmers had to erect larger buildings and more of them. The expansive fields that surround the barns are indicative of the near industrial operation that occurred at this particular farm in the mid-twentieth century.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. SM-770

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other Four Tobacco Barns

### 2. Location

street and number near 38822 Middletons Farm Lane      not for publication

city, town Oakley   x   vicinity

county St. Mary's

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Edward Dyer Middleton

street and number General Delivery telephone N/a

city, town Clements state Md zip code 20624

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse tax map and parcel TM-31, P-284

city, town Leonardtown liber MRB 543 folio 231

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District  
     Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
     Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
     Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
     Recorded by HABS/HAER  
     Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
     Other:

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<u>    </u> district	<u>    </u> public	<u>  x  </u> agriculture	Contributing
<u>  x  </u> building(s)	<u>  x  </u> private	<u>    </u> commerce/trade	<u>  4  </u>
<u>    </u> structure	<u>    </u> both	<u>    </u> defense	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u> site		<u>    </u> domestic	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u> object		<u>    </u> education	<u>    </u>
		<u>    </u> funerary	<u>  4  </u>
		<u>    </u> government	<u>    </u>
		<u>    </u> health care	<u>    </u>
		<u>    </u> industry	<u>    </u>
		<u>    </u> landscape	Noncontributing
		<u>    </u> recreation/culture	<u>    </u> buildings
		<u>    </u> religion	<u>    </u> sites
		<u>    </u> social	<u>    </u> structures
		<u>    </u> transportation	<u>    </u> objects
		<u>    </u> work in progress	<u>    </u> Total
		<u>    </u> unknown	
		<u>    </u> vacant/not in use	
		<u>    </u> other:	

**Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory**  
    0

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## 7. Description

Inventory No. SM-770

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Located on the east side of Oakley Road near Oakley, Maryland, four tobacco barns stand in the middle of an expansive cultivated field. Oriented on a north/south axis, the barns are situated on a flat, cultivated tract consisting of 101.79 acres. Only about 50 acres immediately visible from the road were surveyed. The property is bounded by Oakley Road to the west, a residential subdivision to the south, and agricultural and wooded tracts to the east and north.

Probably constructed in the mid-twentieth century, the four frame tobacco barns feature long rectangular plans with side gable entries. Standing on concrete pier foundations, the barns are sheathed with vertical boards. The gambrel roofs are covered corrugated metal. Unlike many contemporary barns, all of the tobacco barns feature four side gable through tractor-ways rather than axial plans that extend the entire length of the building from gable end to gable end.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. SM-770

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The construction of tobacco barns tends to be associated with rises in market prices. It is therefore not surprising that four of the largest tobacco barns in the county were constructed on the east side of Oakley Road in the mid-twentieth century. As the Agricultural Schedules of the United States Census for the years 1940-1950 reveal, large increases in tobacco yields were reflective of the rising price of Maryland tobacco. In combination for increased needs, improvements in fertilizers and mechanical planting also resulted in increased yields. In order to house this the crop, farmers had to erect larger buildings and more of them. The expansive fields that surround the barns are indicative of the near industrial operation that occurred at this particular farm in the mid-twentieth century.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. SM-770

Hammett, Regina Combs. History of St. Mary's County, Maryland: 1634-1990. Ridge, Md: Self-published, 1994.

United States Census, Agricultural Schedules, 1940-1960.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 50 acres  
Acreage of historical setting 101.79 acres  
Quadrangle name Leonardtown

Quadrangle scale: 1:24 000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is bounded by Oakley Road to the west, a residential subdivision to the south, and agricultural and wooded tracts to the east and north. A more specific description of the properties boundaries can be found in St. Mary's County Land Records Liber MRB 543, Folio 231.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyor		
organization	St. Mary's County Department of Planning & Zoning	date	August, 2000
street & number	22740 Washington Street	telephone	301-475-4662
city or town	Leonardtown	state	Maryland

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

# CAPSULE SUMMARY

Addendum to SM-770

Middleton Tobacco Barn A

Middletons Farm Lane

Oakley Vicinity

St. Mary's County, Maryland

Situated northeast of four mid-twentieth century tobacco barns on the Middleton Farm is an early nineteenth-century tobacco barn. Middleton Tobacco Barn A sits on a gently sloping plain on the north side of a dirt farm lane, one half-mile east of its intersection with Oakley Road. The main block of Middleton Tobacco Barn A measures sixty by twenty four-and-a-half with an early, if not original, shed measuring seventy-four-and-a-half by fourteen feet along the south elevations. Unlike the gambrel-roofed twentieth-century barns on this property, Barn A has a cross-axial plan, gable roof, hewn and pit-sawn timbers and mortise-and-tenon joinery suggesting it predates the modern barns by at least a century.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. SM-770

Name Middleton Tobacco Barn A  
Addendum

Number 9 Page 0

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Situated 0.16 miles northeast of four mid-twentieth century tobacco barns on the Middleton Farm is an early nineteenth-century tobacco barn. Middleton Tobacco Barn A sits on a gently sloping plain on the north side of a dirt farm lane, one half-mile east of its intersection with Oakley Road. A small building on the barn's east side was used to house migrant tobacco laborers. The barn is otherwise surrounded by fields and woodland. The main block of Middleton Tobacco Barn A measures sixty by twenty four-and-a-half with sheds along the south and west elevations. Unlike the gambrel-roofed twentieth-century barns on this property, Barn A has a gable roof, hewn and pit-sawn timbers and mortise-and-tenon joinery suggesting it predates the modern barns by at least a century.

Barn A displays a cross-axial plan oriented east to west. Seven bays divided the barn, with three eight foot bays on each side of a twelve-and-a-half foot central door bay. A door would have been centered on each gable end, although the west gable end has now been covered with a shed and the door removed. Timbers within the barn are a mixture of hand-hewn and pit-sawn, fastened with a combination of pegged mortise-and-tenon and nailed half-lapped joints. All primary joints are labeled with carpenter's marks. Two cross-sills transect the barn on either side of the central aisle. The large central aisle suggests the barn was equipped from the beginning for horse-drawn wagons which would have needed to enter through one door and exit through an opposing door. Another cross-sill runs the length of the barn at the center of its width, directly below the roof's ridge. This cross-sill terminates at the central aisle and starts anew on the other side while supporting a hanging tier system. Each hanging tier is comprised of two posts (averaging two by three inches) spaced an average six inches apart. A round peg stretches between the posts at every tier supporting the ends of stripped sapling tier poles which then extend to the north and south walls. The barn's structure rests on intermittent brick piers.

Vertical board siding covers the barn punctuated by an irregular combination of top- and side-hinged vertical board vents. A gable roof, continuous over both the barn and a shed on the barn's south elevation, is covered with corrugated sheet metal. Rafters are on four-foot centers and rest on a flat false plate. Each rafter is supported by three collars.

The shed on the barn's south elevation measures seventy-four-and-a-half by fourteen feet and may be original. Major timbers within the shed are hewn and exhibit carpenter's marks similar to those in the barn. In addition, the rafters of the barn's roof rest on the shed's false plate making the shed fully included in the barn's roof. However, if the shed was added early, the barn's roof could have been replaced to accommodate the new shed. A Period II or III shed on the barn's west elevation is supported by a mixture of round and sawn posts and dates to later period.

Middleton Tobacco Barn A, built over a century before four prominent twentieth-century tobacco barns on the Middleton farm, exhibits key characteristics of early nineteenth-century tobacco curing. As farmers began to build larger barns to accommodate larger tobacco crops, tier poles could no longer span the width of the tobacco barn. Elaborate hanging tier systems, like that in the Middleton Barn A, were developed to not only support the tier poles but to make it possible to span the width of the barn with two tier poles. A possibly original shed on the barn's south elevation suggests farmers and barn builders at this time were experimenting with how they could build large structures to hold a maximum amount of tobacco. During the mid-twentieth century, as tobacco farming boomed, Barn A supplemented the tremendous curing space provided by four new and very large barns elsewhere on the Middleton farm. Today the Middleton Tobacco Barn A is used for farm equipment storage and shows sign of deterioration.

Information gathered from this barn can also be used to understand larger patterns of tobacco barn construction and curing processes across southern Maryland. Between 2007 and 2008, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design conducted intensive-level documentation across Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties on tobacco barns that represented both common and unique construction between 1750 and 1950. Like the Calvert County Tobacco Barn Survey conducted in 1990, the purpose of this study was to document and record tobacco barns as a highly threatened architectural and agricultural resource. The National Trust for Preservation cited the Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn as one of the eleven most threatened building types in the United States. Information from this study reveals specific patterns of change over time in use and construction of tobacco barns across the southern Maryland region.

SM-770

Middleton Tobacco Barns

Middletons Farm Lane

Oakley Vicinity

St. Mary's County, Maryland

For additional documentation of this resource see the "Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn Project"; call number FRR Mary 21





SM-770 Middleton Tobacco Barn A  
Avenue, St. Mary's County  
Photo by Center for Historic Architecture and Design Staff  
Looking southeast  
January, 2008



SM-770

Four Tobacco Barns - Oakley

St Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Md SHPO

Nov/99

Looking E

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